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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION ON IRAQ

#### Summary

-- Lead story in all papers published today, December 5, focuses on developments and continued violence in various parts of Iraq.

#### Editorial Commentary

-- "Towards a suitable climate for the Iraqi elections"

Semi-official, influential Arabic daily Al-Rai (12/05) editorializes: "There is no interest for any of the Iraqi people to escalate confrontations and violence prior to the most important event at this stage, an event that is supposed to be the qualitative step for establishing the new Iraq.. This is the situation: the Iraqis have no choice but to recognize the fact that they have no homeland other than Iraq and that everyone will lost if they place their sectarian, party or ethnic interests before Iraq's higher national interests and before the interests of the Iraqi people.. It is an opportunity that must be taken and all efforts must be exerted to provide the suitable climate for its success."

-- "Beautifying the political ugliness!"

Daily columnist Mohammad Kawash writes on the back-page of independent, mass-appeal Arabic daily Al-Arab Al-Yawm (12/04): "I can understand that a performer like Haifa Wahbeh or Nancy Ajram [famous Arab singers] would resort to some cosmetic operations . but I do not understand that the administration of leading superpower like the United States would resort to suspicious schemes, to paying huge amounts of money and to employ public relations companies to beautify its image and improve its reputation that has reached rock bottom. Washington allocated huge amounts of money to employ Iraqi and Arab writers and journalists in the 'beautification workshop' and has established radio and television stations and newspapers for the purpose of changing the mood of the Arab and Muslim people and to influence the Arab public opinion after the occupation of Iraq in order to change the occupation into 'liberation' and the destruction of the state into the 'reconstruction' of Iraq'.. Who can beautify the image of the United States and improve its image especially that the scandals continue to flow out on daily basis on the Iraqi and American fronts? A beautician cannot fix what age has destroyed. The thing that would beautify and improve America's image and restore its respect among the people and the nations is not war, destruction, terror and occupation and not the money paid to newspapers, satellite televisions and radios and the spread of lies and disinformation, but rather a little justice with which it deals with the issues of the nations, nothing more and nothing less."

-- "Buying consciences or selling homelands"

Chief Editor Taher Udwan writes on the back-page of independent, mass-appeal Arabic daily Al-Arab Al-Yawm (12/04): "The latest scandal of 'Uncle Sam's democracy' is what the occupation army in Baghdad said about paying dollars to Iraqi newspapers within the context of a secret program designed to publish articles that hail the Americans.. There is no limit to the disinformation, the forgery and the creation of false stories and lies that has engulfed the invasion and then occupation of Iraq. The strange thing is that the U.S. administration continues to insist on surrounding this shameful operation with a halo of morality called the spread of freedom and democracy in the Middle East.. Anyhow, the story is painful and ugly, not just on the American side but also on the Arab side, because there are writers and journalists in the Arab world who have contributed, and continue to do so, to the 'beautification' campaign of the

American occupation, and who have gone as far as describing it as a 'liberation'. This not just national and pan-Arab corruption, but also moral corruption and deviation that is more dangerous than AIDS and the Avian Flu on the conscience and culture of this nation. The scandals of the U.S. administration in terms of violations of freedoms and human rights have been hung out like dirty laundry . and yet we are not seeing any serious move by funding organizations and offices that are mushrooming in the Arab world to condemn this heinous crime against the freedom of the media. In reality, these are just another item of the American budget for 'disinformation'. In the 2006 draft budget, between 80 and 120 million Dollars were allocated for American Corners that is libraries and media and cultural centers designed to 'reach out to the youth and to those who want to work with the United States'. Corners for homeland sellers in this age of buying consciences."

-- "Locally made"

Daily columnist Nahed Hattar writes on the back-page of independent, mass-appeal Arabic daily Al-Arab Al-Yawm (12/04): "When the American occupation army suffers the loss of ten soldiers and the injury of another eleven in one day in Iraq, it is normal. But when these losses occur in an area supposedly well combed by and wreaked with destruction and killing and bombed with chemicals by the occupiers, we would conclude that there is a flagrant operational malfunction in the performance of the American soldiers in Iraq.. The number of American soldiers in Iraq is less than the third of the number required to fight the resistance . but what is more important is that the American soldier misses one very significant thing, namely the feeling that he is fighting for a cause, add to it the feeling that he could die at any moment would make him a scared human rag and a lethal one at the same time.. The American defeat has happened and is happening now and it starts on the moral level. The American aggression against Iraq began with a series of lies that were exposed soon after the war, while stories of mass killings and horrible detentions and scandalous tortures have seen to the destruction of the lie of 'democracy' that has since become synonymous with corruption, thievery and criminality.. The United States has sunk morally and this is what the American soldier feels to his bones while he waits for death."

HALE